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ABSTRACT

This book for young people examines the history, purpose, and daily routine of government-operated boarding schools for American Indians and tells the personal stories, often in their own words, of several young students. Chapter 1 describes the journey to Pennsylvania of the first Indian children to attend the Carlisle school in 1879. Chapter 2 gives a brief history of Indian childrearing and education customs and the loss of old ways after White conquest. Chapter 3 describes Captain Pratt's philosophy of Indian education as one of relocation and acculturation, and how, under his supervision, the Carlisle school became the model for schools operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Chapter 4 recounts how Indian students were forced to cut their hair, change their names, and dress like Whites. The ban on speaking their own language resulted in runaways, harsh punishment, homesickness, and even death. Chapter 5 tells how the Whites' perception that Indians were inferior resulted in a vocational curriculum, with much hard work. Chapters 6 and 7 describe social life, extracurricular activities, and the success of sports at Indian schools. Chapter 8 recounts how most students returned to their Native ways after boarding school, and how some became politically active and worked to improve Indian life. Chapter 9 tells how changing attitudes in the 1930s about Native Americans resulted in the closing of many boarding schools and the introduction of Indian history and culture into the curriculum. (Contains references, a bibliography, many photographs, and an index.) (TD)

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